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### THREE-DIMENSIONAL CONVEYOR

#### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

##### 1. Technical Field

The present invention relates to a three-dimensional conveyor which enables arrangement of the conveyance line in two-dimensional or three-dimensional directions, with high freedom of arrangement, in a small space effectively. The conveyor is capable of changing a direction of the conveyance line of articles such as a tray or container holding fruit, a foodstuff, or the like article to U-turn in a small curvature or to travel upward or downward on multiple circulation stairs in a small space.

##### 2. Description of the Related Art

Various conveyors have been disclosed for conveying articles in three-dimensional directions. For instance, Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2001-139121 discloses a chain structure for a three-dimensional conveyance line. Japanese Patent Kohyo 2001-517591 (Published Japanese Translation of PCT Application) discloses a chain conveyor system.

The chain structure disclosed in laid-open Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-139121 is constituted of top plates for carrying articles thereon and linking portions